



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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For Immediate Release:
April 6, 2010
Release No. MA 2010-042

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Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries seeks Corps of Engineers permit to place fill material to restore fishways

CONCORD, Mass. – The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries is seeking a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct work in waters of the United States in conjunction with restoring and maintaining fishways at 180 existing facilities in Massachusetts.

This notice is being reissued to include an additional list of project locations to the public notice issued on March 30, 2010. The proposed work would be in navigable and inland waters and would result in discharge of dredge or fill material in coastal streams and the Merrimack River. The purpose of the work would be to restore and maintain fishways at 180 existing facilities to provide diadromous fish access to spawning and nursery habitats.

The work is proposed in navigable waters and coastal streams in Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth and Suffolk counties in Massachusetts. The extent of the work would range from minor repairs to replacement. Fishways are typically 30-100 feet in length, 4 to 6 feet wide, and 2 to 4 feet deep. Construction materials are usually steel reinforced concrete and concrete or wood baffles. Cofferdams would be temporarily placed to dewater work areas during construction.

The proposed project will impact Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for juvenile and adult Atlantic salmon at the Pawtucket Dam and the Essex Dam sites on the Merrimack River. The work would also affect EFH habitat for forage species. However, the Corps has made a preliminary determination that the site-specific adverse effect will not be substantial. Further consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding EFH conservation recommendations is being conducted and will be concluded prior to the final permit decision.

The application for the federal permit was filed with the Corps of Engineers in compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates the discharge or fill of material in United States waters, including wetlands; and with Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, which provides for federal regulation of any work in, or affecting navigable waters of the United States. The public notice can be viewed on the Corps website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select Regulatory/Permitting and then weekly public notices.

Public comments on the Corps permit review (File # NAE-2004-3550) should be forwarded no later than May 6, 2010 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory Division (ATTN: John Sargent), 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751. Additional information is available from Permit Project Manager John Sargent at 978-318-8026 or toll free 800-343-4789 or 800-362-4367 (if calling from within Massachusetts) or by email to: john.c.sargent@usace.army.mil.

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